

MOTION BY CHAIR HILDA L. SOLIS

September 6, 2016

EVALUATION OF COUNTYWIDE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Between Friday August 19 and Monday August 22, 2016, Los Angeles City Paramedics transported more than two dozen individuals in the Skid Row to area hospitals, many of whom were suspected of ingesting synthetic marijuana, also known as “spice.” It is a newer, man-made drug that can lead to severe and life-threatening health effects. Spice vapor or smoke can also be harmful to those who are in close proximity to someone who is using spice.

The Department of Public Health has developed a fact sheet on the effects of spice in English and Spanish, as well as a Health Alert for health care providers. Fact sheets were distributed to homeless individuals through street outreach and have also been supplied to homeless service providers for further distribution. Fact sheets will be distributed at planned Town Hall meetings throughout the County, in addition to at local health clinics, parks, and libraries. Health Alerts with information on the adverse health effects of Spice have been distributed through the LA Health Alert Network to thousands of providers in Los Angeles County, including providers in Emergency Departments.

Given the recent series of events that put a toll on emergency room capacity, it is important to ensure that emergency medical service calls and health care delivery at local hospitals will not be significantly impacted.

The safety and well-being of all Los Angeles County residents is a primary

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concern. In order to ensure that appropriate health care resources are available to all individuals who are in need, it is vital to conduct a comprehensive Countywide capacity evaluation of the number of emergency medical service responders and hospital emergency room beds and providers available to address given future incidents of similar or larger scale.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Health Services, Emergency Medical Services, in partnership with County and City of Los Angeles Fire Departments and the Hospital Association of Southern California, to evaluate the capacity of emergency medical services responders and emergency room capacity throughout the County and report back in 14 days with a plan to address massive threats to public health and safety, in addition to routine health care delivery.

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HLS:jyp